

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

SUBJECT Church Section in GAI

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1. A special section has been created in the German Administration of the Interior to handle security problems connected with the church. Joseph Hom, church specialist of the SED, has been put in charge of this section. It is his duty to keep an eye on all church connections with the West and to recommend necessary measures to guide the political activity of the church in the Russian Zone.

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Comment: Hom is on the editorial staff of the "Berliner Zeitung". His address is given in the Berlin telephone directory as Berlin-Charlottenburg, Knesebeckstr. 92 (British Sector).

2. Hom was given this assignment after he had reported to the SED Politbüro on Myron C. Taylor's visit with Cardinal Preysing. According to Hom, Taylor brought a message from the Pope promising material American assistance in the struggle against Communism. Hom claimed that Bishop Dibelius of the Evangelical Church has been promised similar support by the British. Hom predicted a new wave of resistance in the Russian Zone that would call for extremely careful countermeasures.
3. The SMA had recommended that church groups in the Russian Zone should follow the example set in Czechoslovakia. Hom stated that it is impossible to find any nationalistic groups in the Roman Catholic Church in the Russian Zone corresponding to the nationalistic groups that had always existed in the Czech Church. He admitted that there is considerable nationalistic sentiment in the Evangelical Church but claimed that an attempt to gather it in the "National Front" would alienate equally large numbers of pacifist, internationalist Protestants. The Politbüro had hoped to enroll the Pfarrerbund in the "National Front" but Hom convinced them that this is impossible.

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4. Representatives of the SMA pointed out that they have handled the churches very generously and feel that they have a right to political cooperation from the churches now. Hom admitted that the churches have been well treated. Nevertheless they have become the center of resistance in the Russian Zone. If the SMA wants to combat the churches, it will have to censor sermons and church teaching or it will have to form groups of progressive democrats within the churches. A forceful police action against the church now would have grave repercussions in western Germany. According to Hom it is necessary to proceed with thorough understanding of the peculiarities and nuances of the church and to prepare public opinion very carefully. The lower units of the SED and the police authorities must be kept fully informed of all plans in this campaign.

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